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Mission



DECEMBER 1969

“ . . . to explore thoroughly the Scriptures and their meaning; . . . to understand as fully as possible the world in which the church lives and has her mission; . . . to provide a vehicle for communicating the meaning of God’s Word to our contemporary world.”

—EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT, JULY, 1967

Mission

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Christmas . . . and What Shall We Do?

It would take an extraordinary memory for most members of Churches of Christ to recall the last time they have heard a sermon on the birth of Jesus. It would be a miracle, of the proportions of the Incarnation itself, if such a sermon has been preached from a pulpit of a Church of Christ at any time remotely close to December 25th.

This is a religious tragedy of immense dimensions; first, because in the process, our brotherhood neglects or ignores one of the central tenets of the Bible and the Christian faith. Second, because in a practical sense, we annually turn our religious backs on a season of the year when the minds of most people, for whatever brief period and whatever reason, are turned toward thoughts of peace, love and sharing. Theological propriety, if not common sense, would suggest that we ought to use such occasions to the greater glory of God—as a chance to invest human experience with religious meaning

and as an opportunity to relate the real meaning of the Incarnation to the ordinary affairs of men and nations.

Our religious posture on Christmas reflects another tragedy as well. It demonstrates the degree to which our doctrinal stance is dictated, not by what the Bible teaches, but by what the denominations are doing. The extent to which the doctrinal position of the Churches of Christ is described by many of its preachers and most of its members in terms of “what we don’t do or don’t believe” is significant and revealing (e.g., we do not believe in instrumental music, baptism by sprinkling, dancing, smoking, drinking, mixed bathing . . . and Christmas). Perhaps the time will come when we will take the restoration of New Testament Christianity seriously and seek to discover and describe what God wills us to *do*, not what he has decided, in our judgment, is wrong with what everyone else is doing!

HGL

The Scandal of the Incarnation

DAVID GRAF

The doctrine of the Incarnation has been a scandalous subject since the earliest days of Christianity. The passing of centuries has not dulled the controversy or removed the stigma attached to the concept. The contemporary world has no place in its technological and scientific vocabulary for words about the descent of deity into human existence. In an age when man is reaching to the stars and penetrating the heavens, he would rather speak about the ascent of humanity.

This criticism and skepticism does not reflect any particular or peculiar prejudice against the Christian faith. Ira Levin's recent novel, *Rosemary's Baby*, is a good example of what this other-worldly dimension does to the modern mind.¹ This is the remarkably realistic story about an actor's wife living in the apartments of New York

who is seduced by Satan and gives birth to his child. The tale is complete with devils and demons, sorcery and incantations. The response it provoked from one critic can be taken as typical: "Satan may be around but he is probably a rental agent dangling a two year lease and assuring you that new buildings are soundproof."²

the humble form . . .

This conflict of world views is not to be minimized, but a preoccupation with it risks the danger of passing by the real scandal of the Incarnation. The emphasis in the New Testament is not the scandal of the enfleshment of God, but the scandal of the *humble form* that God took when he became flesh.

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he

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was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

The Incarnation is the disclosure and revelation of God's nature. Disclosed for all generations of mankind to see is God's capacity to bend downward. Revealed is a picture of God seeking man in a very concrete manner—in the flesh! He is not like some absentee landlord who dwells a long way off from his tenants, unconcerned about their plight. On the contrary, he is so radically concerned about the destiny of men that he takes the form of a servant and dramatizes his love by the total identification with those in need: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). The Incarnation is testimony that God is not hostile to the human race as he took upon himself poor, wretched human nature. Christ deprived himself of all the divine prerogatives to which he had a legitimate right to become a part of humiliated humanity.

God's deity is thus no prison in which he can exist only in and for himself. It is rather his freedom to be in and for himself but also with and for us, to assert but also to sacrifice himself, to be wholly exalted but also completely humble.³

Symbolic of this was the humble and mundane surroundings of the manger in Bethlehem, where the Word became flesh. Here, where the smell of straw and animal waste filled the air and with common shepherds as witnesses, God descended the staircase of heaven to take the role and mission of a servant. He would be called insane, demon-possessed, a glutton and drunkard and a blasphemer. He would share the homelessness of the vagrant, the excommunication of the prostitute and tax-collector

and finally the death of the political criminal. As Emil Brunner has expressed it: "His whole life is this movement of coming down and entering into sinful reality."⁴ When God became flesh, he took the form of a misfit. The scandal is not that God became man, but that God became *this* man—Jesus of Nazareth.

. . . discipleship

The significance of God's sharing the human predicament with us is the light that it sheds on the nature of discipleship. God is known by his acts, not by philosophical speculation. The nature of God is revealed not in abstract words but concrete deeds. Our God, as Blaise Pascal was fond of putting it, is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the god of the philosophers. The fascination is not with the discussion of whether God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, but rather with what God is *doing* in history. The nature of the church as the body of Christ is revealed in a similar fashion. It is not by words and descriptions which tell us that we are different, distinguished, better and greater than others. It is rather by our deeds and actions in the role of God's humble servant. The vital question is shifted between that of an admirer and a follower.

A follower is or strives *to be* what he admires; an admirer holds himself personally aloof, consciously or unconsciously, he does not discern that the object of his admiration makes a claim upon him to be or to strive to be the thing he admires.⁵

The gospel of the Incarnation is not the declaration of a general religious truth, but God's costly identification with us in the concrete realities of our mundane existence. The Incarnation is our call to renounce power, prestige and comfort in identifying with and serving the needs of the world: "As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17: 18).

The Incarnation is a call for a religious movement which began in the rural and

frontier areas of our country in the nineteenth century to identify with the urbanization trend of this century. The 1790 census revealed that the population was 96.6 percent rural and 3.4 percent urban. We have now reached a time when 75 percent of the populace lives on only 10 percent of the land area in the United States. The city must become more than a place to make a living. It must be the place where we take up our residence as God's servants as well. The distaste for congested freeways, air pollution, and crowded apartments and buildings must be transcended by our desire to serve where the greatest portion of humanity dwells and where the greatest needs are present. The ministry of the church, which has traditionally been directed to leisure time and the family setting, must become involved with occupational and economic life.

The Incarnation is a call for the suburban church to minister to the needs of the inner city. It is a call for the church to identify with the oppression and poverty of the ghetto, slums and skid rows. Jesus did not wait in the synagogues or temple for those who might be interested in his message. On the contrary, he was found among those who had no access to the religious institutions, the church-estranged people of his day. The Incarnation is our call to become involved with the irreligious and godless where they are, not to seek ways to bring them into our buildings.

The Incarnation is the call for the church to deny its whiteness and assume the form of blackness. The problem of racism will not be overcome by talk and discussion, but by total identification and involvement with the life of the black community. This blackness has nothing to do with skin color. "To be black means that your heart, your soul, your mind and your body are where the dispossessed are."⁶

. . . no longer at ease

The refusal of the church to make itself of no reputation and assume the role of a

servant is a refusal to share in the humiliation of her Lord. The humiliation of the church is her *raison d'être*—the only real humiliation being the refusal to be humiliated.⁷ Hans Jurgen Schultz, a German theologian, has speculated that modern history could have been different and less tragic if establishment Christians in Germany had chosen in the 1930's to identify themselves with the outcast and persecuted Jews by wearing on their sleeves the yellow star which the Nazis required the Jews to display. Those who held that Christianity was an individual and private matter independent of political issues formed the greatest resistance to any such effort.⁸ This bifurcation of life into the spiritual and worldly drew the special scorn of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who maintained that only those who cried out for the Jews had the right to sing Gregorian chants. He realized that such identification was crucial and essential for the church, for in Christ the unity of God and the world was established.

The hour in which the church today prays for the kingdom is one that forces the church, for good or ill, to identify itself completely with the children of the earth and of the world. It binds the church by oaths of fealty to the earth, to misery, to hunger, to death. It makes the church stand in full solidarity with the guilt of the brother. The hour in which we today pray for God's kingdom is the hour of utmost togetherness with the world, a time of clenched teeth and trembling fist.⁹

This kind of identification with the world is costly and difficult, for it does not mean approval of the world but conflict with it: "Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the good of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfilled present."¹⁰ The call of the Incarnation is a call which unsettles and disturbs the comfortable life and one's former existence. T. S. Eliot captured this thought in his "Journey of the Magi." The Wise Men returned to their homeland after witnessing

the Christ child only to find that this change
had taken place.

We returned to our places, these King-
doms,

But no longer at ease here, in the old
dispensation,

With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.¹¹ m

¹ New York: Dell Publishing, 1967.

² S. K. Oberbeck, *Newsweek* (April 17, 1967), p. 112.

³ Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 49.

⁴ *The Scandal of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), p. 82.

⁵ Soren Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 234.

⁶ James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 151.

⁷ Albert H. van den Heuvel, *The Humiliation of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 54.

⁸ Franklin H. Littell, *The German Phoenix* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), p. 16.

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Thy Kingdom Come: The Prayer of the Church for God's Kingdom on Earth, 1932," in John D. Godsey's *Preface to Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 33.

¹⁰ Juergen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 21.

¹¹ T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958), p. 69.

Christmas in the Ghettoes

A star gleams white on a lamp post bare
Where the lights of darkness forever glow;
The streets lie cold in the ghostly glare,
And cold is the wind as the drifted snow.

And the only song that we hear tonight
Is the cry of the poor damned souls who dwell,
Afar from the Holy City of Light,—
Broken and lone in the city of hell.

—Don Reece

The Shepherds of the Flock

JERRY R. HOLLEMAN

I recently read an editorial in one of our other brotherhood publications that was rather typical of hundreds of sermons I have heard and articles I have read. It was devoted to the malady of "lukewarmness" in the church. According to the editorial, the illness begins when a man says he has to "make a living," or has a right "to a little pleasure, too" or does not "attend services, too." Then he comes to feel that God agrees with his accepting something "lower than the highest" ideal. Then he begins "doing evil." He has "no enthusiasm for the cause of the Lord," he does not attend church faithfully because "the whole affair is tedious and tasteless" and his feeling is "what a weariness it all is."

May I suggest—when those who attend churches today have no enthusiasm and find the whole affair tedious and tasteless,

and say what a weariness it all is—that we consider the possibility that they just might be right. The whole affair may very well be tedious, tasteless and a weariness.

When the "cause of the Lord" is, for all practical purposes, defined as "attending church"; when "enthusiasm" is usually synonymous with "contributing liberally and supporting the program"; when "love" and "Christianity" are measured in the number of appearances at "church" each week; then, my brother, put me down as being one of those who find it tedious, tasteless and a weariness.

. . . feeding sawdust

When a congregation is afflicted with this malady, I would certainly not minimize its problems. They are serious. However, may

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I suggest that when the membership begins to lack enthusiasm, when the organized church and its programs become "tedious, tasteless" and "a weariness"—look first at the organization, its program and particularly its leadership. It does not matter whether it is a union, a business organization, a civic organization, a fraternal organization or a church organization—anytime you hear a "leader" complaining because his members will not "come out" and "support" him—MARK HIM DOWN AS NO LEADER. His program is insignificant and irrelevant, and he is offering no challenge or excitement to his members. In fact, he would probably be scared to death if they really became excited participants. They might "make waves."

When the "sheep" complain or act as though their "feed" is "tedious, tasteless" and "a weariness"—must we always assume that there is something wrong with their taste buds—something wrong with the sheep? The "shepherds" just might be feeding them sawdust.

Christ did not find the church at Laodicea "tasteless." He spewed it out of his mouth for just being "lukewarm." Can we expect the "sheep" to be any more enthusiastic about cold sawdust? Their lack of enthusiasm is certainly cause for concern. Lukewarmness is a very serious problem. However, I have spent my lifetime in the church, and never have I heard a sermon or read a publication suggesting that possibly the "shepherds" just might be a little bit responsible for the problem. Invariably, responsibility is placed elsewhere. Absolute authority and power can, when carefully and skillfully applied, inspire men to die for a cause. When improperly used, it can strangle and stifle incentive and enthusiasm. I propose that the extent, quality and effect of that authority and control be examined as a possible cause of our malady of lukewarmness.

authority . . .

I would begin with this premise: responsibility is in direct proportion to authority. A

little over a year ago, a prominent preacher stood in our pulpit and taught that since elders were "filled with the Spirit," and since they were in fact "agents of the Holy Spirit," then it follows, he said, that any resistance to the elders is, in fact, "resisting or quenching the Holy Spirit" and is a terrible sin. No, this was not a pronouncement of infallibility from the Vatican. It was from a well-known minister and leader of the Churches of Christ and delivered from our pulpit. I must confess that I had never before heard this interpretation of scripture in the church. However, in practice, we have generally followed and observed this as a rule of law. Already, I hear the cries of protest. But let us be honest with ourselves. Let us honestly examine some of our practices and see if they do not produce this very result.

Search your memory. How long has it been since you have heard an eldership stand up before a congregation and simply say, "We made a mistake"? How long has it been since you witnessed a member successfully challenge the actions of an eldership for making a mistake? I have seen the mistakes of eldership challenged by a member; but never have I known an eldership to concede that they made a mistake, even in private—much less in public. Have you?

We will deny vehemently that we believe the eldership is infallible, and we really do not believe it. Yet, in practice, the result is the same. We ridicule the "infallibility" of the Bishop of Rome. Yet, in practice, we ascribe to them, and our bishops assume a posture of infallibility that rivals that of the Bishop of Rome. Oh, we grumble sometimes. We even move to another congregation under another eldership. But the fact remains that once the elders have acted, there is virtually nothing anyone else can do to change or challenge their action. Their word is law.

In the story of the new church at Jerusalem (which we would restore), we find several instances where things were done "with one accord" or "by common con-

sent." How long has it been since your congregation has made even a small decision "by common consent"? About two years ago, the question arose in our congregation regarding the most convenient starting time for Sunday Bible classes. During the men's business meeting, one elder suggested that the congregation be asked its preference of starting times. A second elder cautioned that it would not be wise to refer this matter to the congregation because it would simply cause them to "choose-up sides. This matter should be decided by the elders." It was. However, for a moment there, a little crack of light flickered through and, for an instant, it appeared that the members might be allowed to participate, just a little bit, in the affairs of the church.

little decisions . . .

Do your elders permit the congregation to participate even in the simple, little decisions that concern them? Do they then complain because of "lack of interest"?

One eldership has now been more than eight months acting on a rack for the garbage cans to protect them from the neighborhood dogs and cats. Labor and materials have been volunteered, and it would take all of an hour to build. But the garbage can area still looks like a slum, since no one can act without the approval of the elders.

"These are silly and petty examples," you say. Exactly! This is precisely the point. These are far too silly and petty to occupy the eldership. Elders are inclined to consume themselves in the details of "serving tables" and neglect "the ministry of the word of God."

Elderships are inclined to exercise authority over even the smallest details involving their congregation. How many good and valuable things go undone because we do not "have the approval (or permission) of the elders"? "But," you say, "if you fail to do these good things for this reason, the fault is yours and not the elder's." Is it? About three years ago, one of the young,

energetic and enthusiastic men of a congregation noted that there was no Bible class for college students. He invited a group of college students to come the following Sunday. They responded enthusiastically. He found an unused classroom and started a class. Within three weeks, there were thirty-three students attending his class. Whereupon, he was severely reprimanded and replaced as the teacher because he had not secured the permission of the elders and educational committee. "Well," you say, "he should have gotten their permission. After all, they are responsible for such things." Now, that brings us around to the position that is generally held, and the practice that is generally followed in the Churches of Christ: "If a member fails to do any good and necessary thing simply because he lacks the permission of the elders, the fault is his and not the fault of the elders. However, he should not do these things without first getting the permission of the elders."

That brings us right back around the mulberry bush to where we started. The responsibility for doing good and necessary things rests directly on the member, but the member should first secure the permission of the elders.

"But Bible classes are a different matter," you say. "The elders must control the church's teaching program."

. . . through the church

That was only one example. We are urged and made to feel obligated to channel all of our christian activities through "the church," or more accurately, through the elders. Do we have money to give to the poor? We should give it through the "church" and let the elders spend it. Do we have time to devote to good works? Then we are urged to come to the church building and spend that time in one of the "programs" approved by the elders. Would we like to support a certain missionary program? We must always do it through the elders, *et*

*Is absolute power vested in a small committee
any more scriptural
than absolute power vested in an individual?*

cetera, ad infinitum.

Is it not true that if most elders and most preachers had their way, we would devote all available time, all available energies and resources to the programs adopted and approved by the elders? If they had their way, we would have little or no time, energy or resources left over for personal and private christian activities.

This practical authority of the elders ranges from the smallest, pettiest detail all the way up to the most important decisions.

How many times during our lives have we heard the elders announce to the congregation that we need to choose some new elders or deacons. So they tell us, "therefore, brethren, pick out from among you men of good repute, full of the spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty."

Honestly, have you ever seen it actually done this way? Have you ever known a congregation to truly choose its own elders? Have you ever heard the elders even report to the congregation on whom the congregation's choices were and the amount of support each of the "nominees" received? Have you ever known of the elders ignoring the wishes of the congregation and naming its own choices? Rarely does a congregation choose its own deacons and elders. New elders and deacons are almost always chosen by the old elders, often with little regard to the wishes and desires of the congregation.

"Well," you say, "they probably know best anyway." Not necessarily. Besides, there is a little matter of scripture. We find only two methods in scripture to guide us in the selection of elders and deacons. In one, the congregation picks out its own leaders; in

the other, they are appointed by the evangelist or preacher. There is no command, example or necessary inference that would suggest that elders are to pick elders, or that elders are to pick deacons.

The opportunity to "raise scriptural objections" is a rather hollow thing. The elders have already considered each "nominee" and made up their minds or the names would not have been offered. Once the names have been offered, any challenge is considered to be more a challenge of the elders than a challenge of the "nominee."

If we are completely honest, we must conclude that the eldership has complete control over the selection of new elders and new deacons. The Bible contains no commandment, example or necessary inference that would support our practice and this exercise of power.

In all other aspects of human relations we recognize that the "power of self-perpetuation" is dangerous if not an inherent evil. However, the fact that I question such power and authority in the church will be looked upon by many as heresy. Strange, is it not? And yet, we have the audacity to criticize the "monolithic structures" of other religious organizations. Is absolute power vested in a small committee any more scriptural than absolute power vested in an individual? I find no basis for either.

excommunication . . .

Fortunately, the practice of "withdrawing fellowship" is not as commonplace as it once was. We once "expelled" members for keeping hunting dogs but, thank the Lord, we have matured a little since then. Again, the power to "withdraw fellowship" is exer-

cised exclusively by the elders.

The withdrawal of fellowship is perhaps the strongest punishment that can be meted out by the church. The power or authority to "withdraw fellowship" is, one might say, the ultimate power of the church. Is it wise—and more important, is it scriptural to vest exclusively in the bishops this power to "excommunicate" a member. I find nothing in the scripture that would support this exercise of power. It belongs to the church—not to the bishops.

I mention the foregoing only for the purpose of examining the full range of authority and control—from the most trivial matters to the most critical matters over which elderships exercise control, active and passive. The scriptures contain no commandment, example or necessary inference that would suggest that such authority and control is vested in the eldership. There is ample evidence that the authority in all such matters rests with "the church." It seems to me that we have now come to the crux of the matter: Is the eldership "the church"? I fear that, generally speaking, most elderships act as though they considered themselves to be "the church." They will, no doubt, deny this vigorously. But their actions speak so loudly, I am unable to hear their words.

Think back with me. When we say that "the church" has adopted a certain program—do we really mean that the congregation adopted the program? No, we really mean that the elders adopted it. "Well," you say, "it was adopted in the business meeting of the church." Think back carefully. How many times have you known a "business meeting" to really adopt a program or decide a question? All I have ever seen simply recommend—the elders reserve the actual decisions for themselves.

When Catholics think of "the church," they tend to mean the clergy—the bishops—the Bishop of Rome. Are we really much different?

When we say that "the church" took a certain action or did a certain thing—do we

mean "the church"? Do we mean the congregation? Or do we really mean "the elders"? Equally important—probably more important—the elders tend to think of themselves as "the church."

I have seen this reach a point where the elders resent, as "interference," any enthusiastic interest the members demonstrate in the decisions and affairs of "the church." Too often, they consider the running of "the church" as exclusively their function and guard it jealously.

Elders often pledge to each other that they will not discuss any matter outside the elders' meeting until they have decided the question. The stated purpose is to keep the congregation from getting involved in the matter.

. . . detached from the church

When elders act like they think they are "the church" and when they act like the congregation has to be "guarded against," is it any wonder that the members, sometimes, act like they are "standing on the outside" observing the activities of "the church"? I would raise a possibility. Maybe—just maybe—this could explain some of the "lukewarmness" in our membership. Could their seeming "detachment" from "the church" be that they really have been detached from the church? Could it be that they feel like they are "standing on the outside" observing the elders function as the church? When the elders have functioned as the church and have decided upon the program and the budget, is it not understandable that the members might lack some of that "feeling of personal commitment" that the elders urge upon them? I have heard the members accused of being lukewarm bystanders—observers and even spectators. Well, are they not?

All of my life, I have heard the membership blamed for this situation—this condition. Never have I heard a preacher or writer suggest that the members might be simply occupying the role assigned to them

by the elders.

This brings us to the focal point of this question. What is the scriptural authority of "elders" or "bishops" or "pastors" or "shepherds"? Do the practices that are commonplace in the brotherhood have an adequate base in scripture? Or is the authority which is generally exercised by our elderships an innovation of man?

I find scriptures strangely silent regarding the authority of elders. Some of our preachers have resorted to outrageous contortions of logic in their effort to reinforce the authority and power of their elderships. Too often the purpose of such efforts has been self-serving.

There is, of course, the theory that elders are "agents of the Holy Spirit." Therefore, any resistance to the elders is "resisting" or "quenching" the Spirit. This would, for all practical purposes, make elders infallible. The preacher who advanced this theory relied upon 1 Thessalonians 5:19 for his premise. It seems to me that he completely missed the point of verses 19 through 22. The point is that we should not refuse to hear men who would preach or teach in the name of the Lord. Otherwise, we might be silencing the spirit that is trying to speak through them. We should hear them—hold fast to any good that they impart to us and reject any evil we find in their teachings. If this is not the true meaning, then this is the most garbled and disjointed paragraph in the entire New Testament. It seems to me that it requires a real contortion in logic to make this passage mean that the members of a congregation are not to resist the decisions and instructions of the elders. Under our present structure, Paul's admonition could only be applicable to the elders. They are

the only ones in a position to refuse to permit a man to teach or preach in the name of the Lord—and thereby possibly "quench the spirit."

I have heard the first half of 1 Peter 5:5 used to instruct the members to "be in submission" to the elders. But they never read on and include the second half of the verse: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." This tells me that we are to be in submission to the elders just as we are to be in submission to everyone in the brotherhood. Ephesians 5:21 tells me, "Be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ." 1 Corinthians 16:16 tells me, "I urge you to be subject to such men (the household of Stephanas) and to every fellow worker and laborer."

. . . the rule over you

I find no difference in the submission we owe to elders and the submission we owe to every other brother. I have heard Hebrews 13:17 used to try to make the congregation obey the elders. Of course, you must put the cart before the horse, presume that elders do, in fact, "have the rule over you," before you can apply the following to elders: "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves." The logic must be contorted as follows: "We know that elders 'have the rule over you.' Therefore, Hebrews 13:17 is referring to elders. Therefore, Hebrews 13:17 proves that elders have the rule over you, and you must submit to them." This logic is too wonderful. I cannot attain it.

No, I cannot find any legitimate basis in

When we say that "the church" took a certain action . . .

do we mean the congregation?

Or do we really mean "the elders"?

scripture for the complete and absolute authority and power given to, and assumed by, most elderships. I fear they have fallen into the temptation that Peter cautions against, "neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." The RSV translates it—"not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock." Phillips translates it as "little tin Gods." Christ, Peter and Paul describe and instruct "shepherds" and "elders" but always in terms of service, spiritual oversight, feeding and caring for the flock, guarding and protecting the flock, being examples of christian living—but never in terms of authority and power. In fact, elders are cautioned against such a role.

business managers . . .

Which brings us to the next aspect of the problem—tenure.

Too often our churches are run like a corporation whose board of directors is elected for life. Stockholders only elect the board of directors. Once elected, the board of directors runs the corporation, handles all its business and makes all its decisions. The good and welfare of the corporation becomes their duty. The individual must be sacrificed, if necessary, to protect the good and welfare of the organization. But a board of directors is not elected for life.

I believe the problem is basically this: our elders are almost exclusively "business managers"; they are almost never "spiritual leaders." The apostles concluded that they should not bother themselves with the "business affairs" of the congregation at Jerusalem—they would turn these matters over to the seven. They would devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Our elderships have virtually reversed this role. Too often, they hire a preacher to attend to the prayers and the ministry of the Word, while the elders manage the business affairs of the congregation, make all its decisions and function as "the church."

So long as our elderships continue this present role and cling to their authority and power, it is virtually impossible to depose an elder. Under our present structure, only the elders can depose an elder. This means that it matters little how unqualified, how ineffective, how derelict an elder may be, he will remain an elder so long as he chooses. He may even be a very evil man so long as he is circumspect and hypocritical. If you would challenge my conclusions—search your memory for those instances where elders have been removed. How many elders have you known who were actually "obstacles to be overcome" before any progress could be made in a congregation?

As long as elders hold full authority and power, this is not likely to change much.

There have been a few commendable elderships that have resigned, en masse, so that the congregation might decide whether to re-name them or select other elders. Usually, this has occurred only where the eldership has become hopelessly deadlocked on some important question. It would be refreshing and encouraging to see an entire eldership resign periodically, just so the congregation could express its will.

. . . functions as an elder

Actually, the answer as I see it lies elsewhere.

Recently, I heard a preacher say that we really do not have to worry about removing an elder. He said, "When an elder ceases to function as an elder, he simply is not an elder anymore." Under the present system, his statement is meaningless. However, if elders were following their scriptural roles, his statement would be absolutely correct. If the eldership would completely divorce itself from the managing of the business of the congregation and the making of all its decisions and devote itself entirely to the spiritual leadership and guidance of the congregation, it would then be true that he would cease to be an elder when he ceased

to function as an elder.

Our elderships need to study and emulate all of the biblical descriptions of "shepherds." They should study and follow the admonitions of Peter and Paul. They should teach their flock, always striving to help their sheep mature into spiritual adults. They should comfort those in sorrow, strengthen and pray for those who are sick, care for the widows and orphans, give counsel to those who are disturbed and distressed, give wise guidance to those who are confused or troubled and everywhere be examples of kindness, patience and love, a pattern for others to follow. They must recognize that they will not only answer for their own soul on the day of judgment—they will also be answerable for each and every soul in their charge. If they serve well they are due double honor. If they serve badly, then I would not want to be in their shoes in the day of judgment.

I believe that elders should devote themselves entirely to the spiritual matters of the congregation, cease functioning as "the church" and turn this back to the congregation and leave the petty details of business management to others. Are your elders teachers? Do they visit the sick? Visit the widows and orphans? Give guidance and counsel to the members and devote themselves to spiritually feeding the flock? Recently, in a men's Bible class, this role was suggested as the correct and true role for elders. A member of the group said, "Why, I wouldn't go to any of our elders for spiritual guidance and counsel. None of them is qualified to guide me spiritually." His statement was corroborated by the other members of the class. It was the consensus that these elders were good business managers, but none of them knew enough about the Bible to give spiritual guidance to these men. There are obviously exceptions to this, but

too often this is an accurate description of the elders in the brotherhood and of the attitude of our members toward them.

Am I too severe? Then answer me this: To which of your elders would you go if you had a serious marital problem? A serious question of morals? Etc. The next question is: Would he welcome your problem? Or would he refer you to your preacher? Or a counselor?

. . . a good shepherd

If the "spiritual shepherd" should ever become the role of elders, we would have no further problems in selecting elders. The proper choices and improper choices would be too obvious. If an elder were to cease to function as an elder, we would have no problems in removing him. He would have removed himself, simply by ceasing to function as a "spiritual shepherd."

Aspiring to the office of bishop would tend to make a man more Christ-like—more of a "good shepherd"—more of a "servant."

If our elders would cease being "the church," exercising all its judgments and making all its decisions; if the elders would give "the church" back to our members; our membership just might begin to feel like participants. They might even begin to act like participants. Being a "church member" and "going to church" might cease to be a "spectator sport." Without our elderships acting as "the church," our congregations might, once more, become "the church." They might even start acting like "the church." With an eldership that would devote itself to being examples in Christian living, teaching and guiding us in the ways of Christ, we might even emulate them and begin to act like Christians.

Now, wouldn't that be something else?

m

"Christmas bids us believe that God loves the world and through Christ would redeem it."
—Harold C. Phillips, "The Mystery of Christmas"

Viewing the Science-Christianity Tension

EARLE H. WEST

Deeply interwoven into Western civilization are both Christianity and science. Despite the profound contributions of each and a deep commitment to each, there has been and there remains a tension between the two. Ways of handling this tension have ranged from those who reject Christianity as an outmoded relic of a prescientific age, to those who refuse to look at dinosaur bones and cut their pictures from textbooks. Somewhere between are those who seek a radical restructuring of "traditional" beliefs using science as the criterion of what can be believed. The purpose of this article is to suggest a way of viewing the science-Christianity tension which need not lead to any of these radical outcomes.

There are two possible approaches. One would be to consider the various specific areas of tension in an effort to resolve each. Andrew D. White's classic study¹ followed this line and concluded that Christianity was an impediment to the advance of science. More recently, Bernard Ramm followed this approach² with quite different conclusions.

The other approach considers not the specific findings of science and specific assertions of scripture, but rather examines the purposes and methodology of each. This kind of approach is absolutely necessary as a foundation for any intelligent and fruitful discussion of specific issues. Without discourse at this fundamental level, the treatment of specific problems becomes little more than data juggling in order to achieve some kind of artificial and forced harmony.

The thesis argued here is that tension between Christianity and science arises basically because of issues related to the purposes of each and, growing out of these, issues related to the methodology of each. Since I think confusion on these matters with respect to science is a greater problem than confusion with respect to Christianity (though others would disagree), I shall develop this aspect more fully here.

a tool for handling nature . . .

Science may be viewed as a man-made methodology, an intellectual tool designed

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to help man cope with one aspect of his experience. That is, it is a method of procedure for coping with the physical world. Its purpose is the understanding, predicting and controlling of the natural world of matter and energy. Needless to say, it has been phenomenally effective, and thus, it represents an increasingly better approximation to the fulfillment of God's command in Eden for man to "have dominion over" the physical world. In this respect, science serves the general providence of God. Moreover, scientists are also displaying more of the wisdom and power of God, whether wittingly or unwittingly. Thus far, the Christian may rejoice in the progress of science and participate with zest in its study and development.

Let us now turn from the question of purpose to that of method. We all know that there is tension between science and Christianity relating to creation, the origin of life, evolution and related matters. Underlying this tension are certain operational or pragmatic assumptions characteristic of scientific work. An understanding of these is essential to an adequate view of the various areas of tension.

Science in all of its branches operates within a *naturalistic* framework. From a strictly scientific viewpoint, this restriction is for purely pragmatic reasons. Like the physician who only treats children under 12, or only eye, ear, nose and throat diseases, it is a limitation adopted for practical reasons.

By "naturalistic assumptions" we mean several things. We mean that science "deals only with the finite, not the infinite . . . with phenomena which occur within the three attributes of space and in time."³ We mean that science deals only with repeatable events under the assumption that "there is a regularity, a constancy, a consistency, a uniformity in the operation of the universe. Consequently, if under a given set of conditions a particular phenomenon occurs, then a duplication or repetition of the same set of conditions should produce an

identical particular phenomenon."⁴ We mean that scientists assume "that all events are determined or caused. . . . Finite occurrences are investigated by science with the assumption that finite (or natural) determiners underlie these occurrences."⁵ We mean also that the scientists assumes "that man is capable of appreciating by means of his sense organs and associated biological apparatus, phenomena which occur about him. Science holds that man can observe, know and understand the universe in which he lives."⁶

In a fascinating symposium on the principle of uniformity, M. King Hubbert of Stanford University stated the procedural assumptions of the scientist: "Fundamentally they are two: (1) We assume that natural laws are invariant with time. (2) We exclude hypotheses of the violation of natural laws by divine providence or other forms of supernaturalism."⁷

Even Christian scientists, *qua* scientists, work within these assumptions. The scriptures encourage us to depend upon the regular, uniform operation of nature in the vast majority of our experiences with it. Alfred North Whitehead affirmed that one important ingredient in the rise of modern science was the Christian belief in a rational, dependable, personal God.⁸ Thus, the naturalistic or materialistic assumptions of science add up to "a method—a set of rules—for making discoveries in the realm of verifiable reality."⁹ Viewed in this light, both the Christian and atheist can work in science regardless of their views about the *whole* of reality or the *ultimate* truth about things. Since the Christian view on the whole of reality rejects the naturalistic assumptions, it is inevitable that tensions will arise. Yet, the tensions may be handled satisfactorily so long as scientific assumptions are viewed as operational or pragmatic expedients in order to understand and control the natural world rather than as ultimate metaphysical truths.

These materialistic assumptions create special tensions with regard to the origin

and antiquity of things. The Bible, not being limited by operational naturalism, affirms a supernatural creation. I am not, at this point, proposing any particular view of biblical creation or the antiquity of the earth. Regardless of these issues, the Bible does affirm a *supernatural* origin of things. Science, on the other hand, cannot by its basic assumptions propose a *creation* hypothesis. Insofar as science attempts to push back to any beginnings, scientific explanation will always be within the *naturalistic* framework. Thus, it is a very superficial view of the problem to hail scientific theories about the beginning of the universe as evidence that scientists will soon confirm the biblical doctrine of creation. The term "beginning" means something quite different in a supernatural framework of assumptions from what it means in a naturalistic framework. It is also a very superficial view of the problem to think that the tension can be resolved if only the "Church of Christ" will abandon its traditional interpretation of Genesis 1 and adopt a modern scientific view. A supernatural creation is outside the scope of science and no scientist as a scientist wishes "to admit a discontinuity in nature and . . . assume a creative act forever beyond comprehension."¹⁰

It is important to understand that modifications of traditional interpretations of, say, Genesis cannot resolve the tensions to which we refer. I do not speak of modifications made on the basis of study of the text itself, but solely of those made in order to "harmonize" science and scripture. Similarly, to discredit scientific methods for estimating the age of things (i.e. Carbon 14) does not remove the tension. Regardless of how one may stretch biblical language or undermine the credibility of scientific findings, tension is inevitable since the underlying assumptions are different.

This point of view becomes clearer upon reflecting about the problems of the antiquity of things. From what has already been said, it would be clear that anything God

created would appear by scientific methods to be older than it actually was. This is inherent in the idea of creation and the assumptions of science regardless of whether one thinks of God's having created a full-blown operating world or a primitive mass of hot gases. Each of these conditions, if examined in the light of the naturalistic assumptions of science, would have its natural precursors and, therefore, an "apparent" age greatly exceeding its "real" age.

Bernard Ramm mentioned a similar view¹¹ as having been proposed in an 1857 treatise by Philip Henry Gosse. Ramm's only comment was that the theory was "thin" and that "better sense" would make no distinction between apparent age and real age. Similar short shrift was given to this view by J. D. Thomas¹² who unnecessarily connected it to a "naive literal view" and argued that God "could have" given things an apparent age but that "people will not be disposed to accept the explanation." What Ramm and Thomas overlooked was that the operational, naturalistic assumptions inherent in scientific estimates of age would never terminate in an act of supernatural creation regardless of how or when that event occurred.

Let us summarize to this point. We have developed the view that science is fundamentally a method of helping us deal with the physical world. In that context, certain kinds of phenomena must be excluded; certain limitations exist. These are all comprehended in a single phrase: science assumes a naturalistic stance. This is done for pragmatic reasons. Viewed in this context, there will necessarily be tension as science inevitably proposes some kind of evolutionary explanation of things covering an infinitely long period of time. The Christian may reduce the tension by studying both science and scripture carefully so as to interpret each properly, but he knows that the tension ultimately does not lie in wrong interpretations but in differing methodologies and assumptions.

as a complete philosophy . . .

I would not be true to the facts of our society were I to leave the matter here. I have pictured science as a discipline with certain operating assumptions. Quite frankly, science is not always viewed in this light. Science has acquired the status of a god. The claim is made that science deals with the whole of reality; that it provides the key to all knowledge. The deeply rooted nature of the Judaeo-Christian heritage in American society has prevented to some extent the fullest expression of this view of science. It has flowered in the atheistic milieu of Russia, for example, where few would challenge Stalin's dictum: "There are no things in the world which are unknowable to science." One sees some growth of this view resulting from the successful moon walk.

This view of science is often called "scientism" in the literature. Anthony Standen effectively lampooned it in his book *Science Is a Sacred Cow*. Having been taught science by teachers unskilled in the philosophy of science and, therefore, unable to distinguish science from scientism, Americans are increasingly accepting the practical, naturalistic assumptions of science as the basis for a total philosophy of life.

Some religious people, seeing their culture adopt the assumptions of naturalism, feel that the biblical revelation is no longer

relevant and must be expunged of its foreign matter. Thus, the timid soul begins to 'de-mythologize' the scriptures. Methods of interpretation are uncritically adopted so long as the end result is somehow to harmonize science with scripture and become relevant by making scripture speak in scientific terms.

I do not hesitate to say that when science is viewed as the sole guide to truth, as the only dependable source of knowledge, then science and Christianity are not merely in tension but are mutually exclusive. At that point, the fundamental issue is not science and Christianity but naturalism as a faith versus supernaturalism. It is not a matter of making Christianity relevant; it is a matter of the legitimacy of any Christianity at all.

Supernatural Christianity is totally irrelevant in a cultural framework of naturalism. The two are mutually exclusive. Our task is one which calls for boldness and intellectual rigor. The naturalist need know little of Christianity to ridicule it; moreover, he will probably be unaware of his own assumptions. The Christian must know his own faith well and master the philosophy of science as well. But if the world is to be saved from its alienation, its injustice, its aimlessness, we must discipline our minds and spirits so we can confront the world with the prior claim of its creator. **m**

¹ Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (N. Y.: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 2 volumes.

² Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1955).

³ Sheldon J. Lachman, *The Foundations of Science* (Detroit: Hamilton Press, 1956), p. 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷ M. King Hubbert, "Critique of the Principle of Uniformity," in Claude C. Albritton, Jr. (ed.), *Uniformity and Simplicity* (Boulder, Colo.: The Geological Society of America, 1967), p. 30.

⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (N. Y.: Macmillan Company, 1925), pp. 13f.

⁹ Hans Gaffron, "The Origin of Life," in Sol Tax (ed.), *Evolution After Darwin*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹¹ Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-195.

¹² J. D. Thomas, *Facts and Faith* (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 158f.

Season's Greetings

S. Claus is one of the most remarkable figures of our day. He has bridged nationalistic gaps, having started his career in Europe where he is variously known as Saint Nicholas or Father Christmas. But more important in our day, he is one of the few to bridge the generation gap. Although he is now rather aged, he is still a favorite of the young, and although he has long hair and a full beard, he remains on good terms with those over thirty.

Late in October, S. Claus paused in his work at the Marshall Fields Department Store in Chicago to grant this MISSION interview.

WARD: Mr. Claus, aren't you in Chicago rather early this year?

CLAUS: Yes, earlier than used to be the case. A few years ago, I had to wait until after Thanksgiving to make the scene, but it has gradually become possible to get started prior to Hallowe'en. And I must say, this is an improvement. It was pretty hard to get around to all the stores and shops in only one month.

WARD: I assume that the longer Christmas shopping period means more business.

CLAUS: Oh yes. Business has never been better.

WARD: Is this an indication of a religious revival? After all, Christmas is a religious holiday.

CLAUS: Yeah, that's right. I mean, you're right when you remind me that Christmas is a religious holiday. But frankly, I don't think many people think about it. You know, Christmas is going the way of Hallowe'en. How many people remember that Hallowe'en is the eve before All Saints Day? Not many, but that fact has not hindered the development of Hallowe'en

into a very profitable holiday. The same is true for Christmas. I don't think it really matters whether anyone recalls the birth of Christ at this season. In fact, one might argue that the secularization of Christmas has been good for business.

WARD: You mean that Christmas is just a time for business?

CLAUS: I don't think I like the tone of your voice. What do you mean, "just a time for business"? Do you realize how many people are dependent on Christmas for their livelihood? Why, one high executive of a national chain store tells me that over one half of their annual business is conducted in the one month between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Suppose Christmas were abolished? Think how many people would suffer—the employees out of work, the stockholders with worthless stock and so on. Christmas is business, and business is good for people.

WARD: Then you would consider Christmas a blessing merely as a secularized business holiday?

Christmas benefits . . .

CLAUS: Look, Ward, when you say "merely," it makes it sound like I'm some sort of dirty capitalist. But I don't want to argue with you about economics. Let me point out to you that there are a lot of other benefits that result from Christmas.

For example, think of how benevolent people become at Christmas time. Think of all the people who come down town here in Chicago to shop at Marshall Fields and other stores and who drop a coin or two in the pot of some street corner Santa Claus. And people get together to prepare a basket of food and fruit for some poor family.

WARD: Isn't that "tokenism"? I mean, the shopper spends a hundred dollars or so here in this department store and then gives a dime or even a quarter to a street corner charity. And one basket of food given in December doesn't last a poor family very long—not when you remember that there are twelve months in the year.

CLAUS: Well, you can look at it that way. But I say, it's better than nothing. More money is given to charitable causes in December than in any other month of the year, and it is not just dimes and quarters.

WARD: Is that due to Christmas, or to the fact that December is the last month of the year—the last chance to make the most of income tax deductions?

CLAUS: You are too suspicious. And besides, what does it matter if people do benevolent work because they want income tax deductions? The end justifies the means—or, perhaps we should say, the end justifies the intention.

But let me mention another good result of Christmas, one which might satisfy your do-good attitude. Consider the fact that people are brought together by Christmas. In fact, Christmas is a mini-ecumenical movement. Not only are all kinds of Christians brought together, but also Jews and atheists and agnostics and all types. All types of people join together in singing "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night." They give gifts to one another. There is a real sharing. *Koinonia*, I think, is the word for it.

WARD: You may have a point, the festive atmosphere is apparent. Although, when you get all the shopping crowds in subways and stores, I notice that tempers sometimes flare.

CLAUS: That is temporary. On Christmas morning, everyone is happy.

WARD: What about the poor?

CLAUS: They have a basket of food and fruit.

. . . a religious holiday

WARD: True. . . . Well, let's turn our discussion to another matter. In your wide travels, have you come into contact with members of Churches of Christ?

CLAUS: Oh yes, fine people.

WARD: It is my impression that many members of Churches of Christ do not observe Christmas.

CLAUS: That's right, but one must make a distinction. You won't find many Churches of Christ conducting Christmas services. On the Sunday nearest Christmas, you won't hear any Christmas sermons or hymns. And few of those people will have manger scenes in their homes, nor will they send religious Christmas cards (some prefer to send "Season's Greetings" instead of a message of "Merry Christmas"). But, they *do* observe the secularized version of Christmas. I, myself, am very popular with these people, and they do a good business.

WARD: Why do you suppose that they don't observe Christmas as a *religious* holiday?

CLAUS: There are many reasons. First, Christmas doesn't occur in the Bible. Second, they object that Christmas is Catholic—Christ's *mass*, you know. And third, Christmas has a lot of pagan elements: the Christmas tree, the Yule Log, and so forth.

WARD: Then how come they like you? I thought you were Saint Nicholas. Weren't you the Catholic patron saint of children?

CLAUS: You would bring that up! Look, Ward, you shouldn't hold against someone something that he used to be or used to do a long time ago. That's a Joe McCarthy tactic. I may have made some mistakes in my past, but you ought to judge me now by what I *am*.

WARD: O.k., Mr. Claus, we won't pursue that. But before you have to leave for Macey's in New York, I want to ask you one thing that I'm curious about. I thought that you always say, "Ho, ho, ho." But you

haven't said, "Ho, ho, ho" once in our interview.

CLAUS: Yes, I used to say, "Ho, ho, ho," a lot. But since those d— students

started chanting, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh," I quit. It's bad for business.

WARD: So long, Mr. Claus. Merry Christmas . . . I mean, Season's Greetings!

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" . . . A Man of Sorrows . . . "

Why did He come—
He wasn't invited,
No one seemed to want Him—
To the lost and dying of the world?
"But we don't need anything!",
Looking around them.
But God looked deeper, into their hearts,
And sent His Son.

"All we like sheep have gone astray . . . "

Why did He teach
These thoughts that bothered so many,
And yet seemed so right?
Love?
A hard word to say,
A harder one to live.
His life gave us the words;
His death gave us their meaning.

" . . . He hath poured out His soul unto death . . . "

Why did He die,
Nailed to that cruel tree?
Surely it wasn't my fault,
Or was it?
I drove the nails,
You raised the cross;
But through His death
He brought life to all of us.

" . . . with His stripes we are healed . . . "

Donald F. Calbreath

REVIEWS

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The hefty one

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Volume 6), edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969. 1003 pp., \$22.50, cloth.

First, I said I should; but then I did not. Then I said I would; but still I did not. Now I have come to the point where I will.

I have been arguing with myself as to whether I should mention that Volume 6 of Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* has now been published and released to the public. At first, I argued that such a scholarly, ponderous, expensive volume (series) would look strangely inappropriate in the book review section of a popular journal like *MISSION*. At first, I argued that such a book has too many strikes against it!

I confirmed my first reasoning by remembering that not even all scholars think highly of Kittel: even James Barr strongly dissented with the basic methodology which underlies Kittel's *Theological Dictionary*. Aha, that is another reason why I should not put it in *MISSION*'s review section: it is a dictionary; and who reads dictionaries? (The correct answer is that almost everyone reads dictionaries—in part.)

Besides, I was not sure I could get it across that Kittel is a work printed in English, translated from German, about Greek words. And, besides, I have not even read Volume 6 all the way through (1003 pages). Besides . . .

But I am now ready to say what I believe. Kittel is a tremendous thesaurus of information. By most of us, it is a greatly neglected or overlooked source. It is not

merely a dictionary that states meanings. It attempts to show the meanings of certain Greek words through their background and usage in various periods and literary works. But, in addition to definition and background, Kittel's *Dictionary* seeks to show the theological content of the words treated. In this, Kittel is part dictionary and part exposition. It seems to me that Kittel must be taken into account—whether positively or negatively—by any person or group attempting to discover the meaning of scripture.

Let me level with you. I know that everyone is not prepared financially, academically and even psychologically to rush out and acquire a volume of Kittel. But many who could, will not. They will not because Kittel and almost all reputable scholarship are different worlds to many people. They will not, I fear, because of the unwillingness by many Christians to probe below the obvious and the easy. And this disconnection from scholarship and deeper study is precisely why I now commend Kittel and will mention occasionally in the future something akin to these volumes in their depth and scholarship. Excuse my humility, but I submit that I am more nearly right than not.

When completed, there will be eight volumes that comprise the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Although Gerhard Kittel's name is indissolubly associated with the project, there is a long list of prominent scholars who made significant contributions to this work. This list would begin with the name of Gerhard Friedrich, the man who assumed the editorship of the work upon Kittel's death. Other well known contributors include Guenther Bornkamm, Oscar Cullmann, Joachim Jeremias, Eduard Schweizer and Rudolf Bultmann.

Volume 6 contains words within only two letters of the Greek alphabet (*pi* and *rho*). Some of the words in this volume are *petra* and *petros* (Cullmann), *pisteuo*, *pneuma*, *poneros*, *praus* and *prautes*, *prophetes* and *raka* (Jeremias).

Here endeth the sermon!

—RRM

separated, the impact of the book lessens geometrically, not arithmetically. Together their effect is more than twice their separate values.

If you like the book, you may be interested in an accessory set of posters. They feature enlargement of the photographs in *Listen Christian*.

—RRM

Thanks for nothing

Listen Christian, by Bob Rowland; photos by Ken Heyman. Dayton: Geo. A. Pflaum, 1968. 18 pp., 65 cents, paper.

Even if you are a poor reader, you can probably read this book in about one minute. It has slightly more than 100 words in the text. There are seven coordinated pictures. Brief enough?

Yet, the book (really a booklet) is one of the most powerful pieces I have read recently. I have handed a copy of *Listen Christian* to a number of people and then stood back to observe their facial expressions as clues to the booklet's impact. One person openly shed tears. Some stood or sat in mild, silent shock. Some nodded assent or shook their heads to show that they felt the sting of the message. Almost all were momentarily speechless.

The book devastates apathy and inactivity. With satirical politeness, *Listen Christian* thanks most of us for doing nothing in the face of critical and obvious need around us.

The graphics of the book are excellent. The pictures are correlated with virtual perfection to speak with the prose.

Unfortunately, I have seen the prose of *Listen Christian* appearing in church bulletins and other publications. This should not happen for several reasons. For one thing, it is illegal: the material is copyrighted. But it is a particularly unfortunate separation when the words are divorced from the pictures of *Listen Christian*. When the two are

Gift suggestions

If you want something that is popular but provocative, then try *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven*, by Gary Freeman (Harper & Row, 1969, \$3.95), or *The Peter Principle*, by Dr. Laurence J. Peter and Raymond Hull (Morrow, 1969, \$4.95) or *The Throwaway Children*, by Lisa Aversa Richette (Lippincott, 1969, \$6.95). Underneath the smiles and laughs evoked by Gary Freeman's True Church and Cletus Kinchelow, there are sobering considerations in his satire. Dr. Peter and Mr. Hull give their explanations about why things always go wrong and suggest that "success" is really people arriving at their level of incompetence. There is no humor to *The Throwaway Children*. It is an arresting book which is not content to describe the poignant and widespread problem. It makes suggestions on how to stop the process of "throwing away" countless youngsters.

Add to the above category of thought-stimulators Leroy Augenstein's *Come, Let Us Play God* (Harper & Row, 1969, \$4.95) and Hans Kueng's *Truthfulness: the Future of the Church* (Sheed and Ward, 1968, \$4.50). A more general work, but equally stimulating, is Elton Trueblood's *A Place To Stand* (Harper & Row, 1969, \$2.95).

For an inexpensive but meaningful publication, you might consider *Listen Christian* (see review above). For 65 cents, it would make a good stocking gift for adults. Recipients will either think you are a thoughtful and sensitive person or that you

are playing a cruelty joke on them.

For children, a splendid addition would be the new *Taizé Picture Bible* (Fortress, 1969, \$4.95). The text consists of Old and New Testament selections from the Jerusalem Bible with striking illustrations by Brother Eric de Saussure, a Protestant monk of the Taizé Community in France. And do not forget the fine selection of inexpensive but high-class, well done, brilliantly illustrated *Arch Books* (Concordia, 35 cents each).

If you are thinking of a "reference work," we highly recommend *The New Bible Dictionary*, edited by J. D. Douglas (Eerdmans, 1424 pages, \$12.95). Or, you might want to buy a volume of either the *New International Commentaries* (Eerdmans), or the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Eerdmans) or the *Living Word Commentaries* (Sweet). Both the NIC and Tyndale series have several excellent individual volumes by outstanding contributors. Incidentally, Intervarsity has recently released some of its volumes in the Old Testament Tyndale series. I especially like Kidner's volume on *Genesis* (Intervarsity, 1969, \$3.95). In the Living Word Series, try Pat Harrell's volume on *Philippians* (Sweet, 1969, \$3.50).

The serious Bible student or Bible "major" or seminarian might like Harrison's new *Short Life of Christ* (Eerdmans, 1969, \$5.95) or Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament*, second edition (Oxford, 1968, \$7.00). Or, there is a nifty book which is probably the ultimate in multi-versions: *The New Testament from 26 Translations* (Zondervan, 1967, \$12.50). There is a new introduction worth having: *A General Introduction to the Bible*, by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix (Moody, 1968, \$6.95). If you are thinking about a lexicon, get Bauer's, commonly called "Arndt and Gingrich": *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated and edited by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (University of Chicago, 1960, \$15). If you want a more extensive tool, get any one or all of the

multi-volumed *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Eerdmans, ranging from \$18.50 to \$22.50 per volume).

If you want something colorful but learned, there are several excellent books on archaeological themes with outstanding photographs and illustrations. One is *Masada*, by Yigael Yadin (Random House, 1967, \$12.95). Another in this same category is Kathleen Kenyon's work, *Jerusalem: Excavating 3000 Years of History* (McGraw, 1967).

If your recipient likes to know what is going on, he will find a survey of theological developments during the past year in *New Theology*, No. 6, edited by Martin Marty and Dean Peerman (Macmillan, 1969, \$1.95 paper). The volume features essays on revolution and non-revolution, violence and non-violence, peace and power—major concerns during the past year (and longer).

If you are buying a Bible, you may want to know that the famous Harper Bibles are now published by Zondervan: seemingly the same editions and same fine bindings with a different name. If you are thinking about giving a Bible, why not be a little imaginative: instead of a typical gift Bible, you might look into the possibility of a special Bible. There are study Bibles, wide-margin Bibles, loose-leaf Bibles, multi-versioned Bibles, Greek and Hebrew Bibles (Testaments) and many more. You may be surprised that some of these may be secured through the American Bible Society at amazingly inexpensive prices.

Books Received

- ENVIRONMENTAL MAN by William Kuhns (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 156 pp., \$4.95, hardbound.
- THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT by Bruce Manning Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968) 284 pp., \$7.00, hardbound.
- NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION — *The Pauline Epistles* by Donald Guthrie (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966) 319 pp., \$4.95, hardbound.

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FORUM

Point of view

Dear Editors:

May I suggest an additional possibility to consider in relation to the "Sunrise, Sunset" editorial by R. B. Ward [July, 1969].

Most of us learned at an early age that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Many of us have since learned that the sun does not rise or go down but that the earth revolves. Some have learned that these statements are not necessarily contradictory.

Two men observing a moving train report their observations. One states that the train is departing while the other states that it is approaching. Are we to condemn one of the witnesses because we assume both observations are from the same location? In fact, one is located in front of the train while the other is standing behind the caboose.

In formal scientific writing, we specify where the observer is standing by specifying a reference coordinate system. In astronautics, a space-fixed coordinate system retains its orientation with respect to the celestial sphere. Earth-fixed coordinates retain their orientations with respect to the earth. If we consider the relative motion of the earth and sun in a sun-centered, space-fixed coordinate system, the earth revolves and rotates while the sun only rotates. The same motions relative to earth-fixed reference coordinates will be described differently. In the latter system, the earth is stationary while the sun revolves and rotates about it.

In our early education, we learned that the sun "rises" and "goes down" as it surely does when referenced to the proper earth-fixed coordinates. As our education continued, we were introduced to the rotating sun and to the revolving and rotating earth of space-fixed coordinates. Both views are proper descriptions of the same occurrence; however, the observing points are different. Coordinates define our viewing locations for mathematical or descriptive convenience; therefore, it is not valid to speak of one being correct and another incorrect. The author defines the reference frame to his own individual desire; however, experience has tended to standardize selections which yield convenient results.

In scientific discussions and informal writing, the coordinates are often not specified, depending on conventional usage to establish the reference. Most choices are obvious. As viewed in space-

fixed coordinates, the motion of a train traveling in a straight line on the earth's surface is the sum of many individual motion vectors. There is scant logical reason for describing the train motion in such a complex manner since we travel by train only between points on earth. It is not incorrect to do so—only inconvenient. There is logical reason for describing the motion of the sun relative to the earth's horizon about which the terms "rises" and "goes down" have special significance. Many of the disputed verses may even be indicating the scientific reference coordinate with the phrases "upon the earth" (Genesis 19:23) or "upon him" (Genesis 32:31, Exodus 22:3).

May I assure you that theologians may not accept the Biblical statements, but astronauts and aerospace engineers will continue to make reference to a "rising" and "going down" sun when that is the message to be conveyed.

W. W. Scott

Huntsville, Alabama

Lunar catastrophe

Dear Editors:

... I would like to share with you a few thoughts regarding your provoking question relative to calculating, on the basis of rock samples from the moon, the time of the Fourth Day [September, 1969, p. 94].

In his book, *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch*, Donald Patton expresses the belief that the moon was caught up in the catastrophe (originating in outer space) which caused the flood described in Genesis. Thus, even though the moon presently has no atmosphere, if it has experienced, let us say within the last 50,000 years, a cataclysm, simultaneously and of almost equal proportion as the earth, the uniformitarian methods of dating would be no more valid in determining the age of the moon than of the earth. Interestingly, Dr. Thomas Gold, Cornell astronomer (perhaps you read the article in the October 3 issue of *Time*) has offered a dramatic—at least in uniformitarian circles—explanation for the glittering patches of stone which Neil Armstrong detected on the moon. Gold's explanation: a cataclysmic (naughty word) flare-up of heat and light from within the solar system, and this perhaps only

30,000 years ago. He suggests one whole side of Mercury might have been seared by the blast—a formidable exception in a supposedly tranquil solar system. If this and/or other catastrophes actually took place, which could conceivably have bathed both earth (by penetrating a former atmosphere) and moon with enormous doses of cosmic radiation, our present method of dating might be rendered wholly inaccurate, and we should have to seek for answers to problems of earth and solar history on a different basis. It may be, on the basis of our present knowledge, impossible to determine the age of the moon or the time of the Fourth Day.

A key word in your question is *time*, a property about which we apparently understand very little. In discussing the relationship of time, as we know it on our planet, to the speed of light, Professor A. E. Wilder Smith makes this observation (*Man's Origin, Man's Destiny*, p. 146):

This represents new knowledge gained from Einstein's relativity theory . . . perhaps the evolutionary tree of millions of years (as one reckons today) has been actually passed through in a few days or seconds. This would mean, in the analysis, that the whole process of evolution, today thought to be slow, might have been passed through under creative conditions in a flash of time, and would, if we could view the process from outside, look like a lightning act of creation. Perhaps evolution and creation mechanisms could at some future time, when more is understood about the nature of time, be reconciled on this basis of changing time values, so that we could forget for the time being all about dating methods valid today. The knowledge we need concerns the essential nature of our fourth dimension, which we call time.

I think Professor Hooykaas of the Free University here in Amsterdam is quite correct in his observation that our knowledge of the universe and its origin stands essentially as it did in the days of Job. Perhaps it will always be a matter of waiting until we are ushered into that dimension called eternity before the secrets of the great designer, our God and Father, can be known, fully appreciated and glorified. At any rate, I do not feel we need to be embarrassed by employing a literal understanding of the early chapters of Genesis as a method in attempting to draw back some of the curtains of earth history.

If eternal life holds the promise of opening the secret dimensions of the Father's creation, then every hardship, disappointment or sacrifice for Christ's sake, of whatever degree or consequence, will be ten-thousand fold rewarded. Until then, we shall always, I feel, only know in part, and

hence continue to serve the Father of our spirits, seeing the unseen through the eye of faith.

I did want to share these thoughts with you and ask that you think once again through the busy days and weeks on the Lord's work here in Holland and other lands and add us to your prayer thoughts as we labor with you in his eternal mission. . . .

Thomas Schulz
Amsterdam—W. (Osdorp), Nederland

Restoration of university

Dear Editors:

It is refreshing (perhaps because it is so rare) to see a basically conservative position espoused with literacy and compassion, a feat accomplished by both William C. Martin and Roy Osborne in your October issue. They have certainly set the pace for your second annual awards.

Dr. Martin's article requires additional comment and, perhaps, a bit of historical insight. In his defense of the modern university's hierarchical structure, Dr. Martin neglects to note that the *first* universities, organized in Europe as it ascended from the captivity of the mediaeval church, were student guilds which made their own rules and hired and fired professors. One historian pictures the University of Bologna in the thirteenth century:

The student guilds, originated to provide mutual protection and self-government, came in the thirteenth century to exercise extraordinary power over the teaching staffs. By organized boycotts of unsatisfactory teachers, the students could end the pedagogical career of any man at Bologna. In many cases, the salaries of the professors were paid by the student "universities", and the professors were compelled to swear obedience to the "rectors" of the "universities"—i.e., to the head officers of the student guilds. A teacher desiring leave of absence, even for a day, was obliged to obtain permission from his pupils through their rectors, and he was expressly forbidden to "create holidays at his pleasure." Regulations established by the student guilds determined at what minute the teacher should begin his lecture, when he should end it and what penalties he should pay for deviations from these rules. If he overtalked his hour, the students were instructed by the guild statutes to leave. Other guild regulations fined a teacher for skipping a chapter or decretal in his exposition of the laws and determined how much of the course was to be given to each part of the texts. At the outset of each academic year, the professor was re-

quired to deposit ten pounds with a Bologna bank; from this sum the fines laid upon him by the rectors were deducted, and the remainder was refunded to him at the close of the year on instruction from the rectors. Committees of students were appointed to observe the conduct of each teacher and report irregularities or deficiencies to the rectors. (Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, pp. 917f.)

From this perspective, we might begin to see contemporary radical students as part of a "restoration movement" to recapture an idea of the university far older than John Henry Newman.

In closing, it was interesting to see Milfred P. Munch on your editorial page, after 13 years of wandering through the modernist graduate schools. He could never have worn those sideburns at ACC in his day, nor, one suspects, would he have tried. *Sic semper prudente*.

Don Haymes

Brooklyn, New York

"Smear" passed on

Dear Editors:

In an article calling for "a new maturity of approach," on a certain subject, Edward G. Holley did not show maturity in using the smear term "radical right" even though he used it in quotations [October, p. 122, note 7].

Danger on the Right, backed by the Anti-Defamation League, was a very inaccurate and sloppy job of research in its treatment of Harding College and the National Education Program. After I replied, in *Americanism Under Fire*, the ADL was invited by Barry Farber to defend their attack in a radio discussion with me. They refused to do so. It would have been good if Holley had read my reply before he passed on the smear.

He is requested to do two things. First, define and describe the "radical right" as it is set forth in Forster and Epstein's *Danger on the Right*. Second, prove that this definition fits Harding College and the National Education Program. "Thou shalt not bear false witness" is a passage we all need to be concerned about.

James D. Bales

Searcy, Arkansas

Ultra-conservative or . . .

Dear Editors:

Normally I do not answer adverse comments upon views which I have expressed. Within the limitations of responsible discussion I believe in having my say and letting the other individual have his. Most readers can then discern for themselves what they wish to believe. However, Mr. Bales has implied in his reaction that footnote no. 7 in my

article "The Church College and Public Support . . ." is "bearing false witness" when it places Harding College among the supporters of the right wing political movements in this country. In this view he surely must stand among the minority. While I have not had the opportunity to examine the subject intensively, the following must be some indication that the general political community would regard the National Education Program of Harding College as either ultra-conservative or far right:

Mary Ann Raywid, *The Ax-Grinders: Critics of our Public Schools* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 118-120.

Donald Janson and Bernard Eismann, *The Far Right* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), chapter 6, "Searcy, Arkansas," pp. 92-100.

Mark Sherwin, *The Extremists* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), chapter 6, "God and Country," pp. 82-100.

Edward Cain, *They'd Rather Be Right* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 162-165.

More recently, in a case study of Billy James Hargis and Christian Crusade, *The American Far Right* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), which was reviewed favorably by the *American Political Science Review*, Professor John Harold Redekop notes on p. 98, in discussing Hargis' erroneous statistics concerning living standards in foreign countries, that they were compiled at Harding College, presumably by the National Education Program.

While not wishing to prolong this response, I think that Forster and Epstein's *Danger on the Right* would generally support a definition given in Redekop's preface: "What terms should one use and what do they mean? . . . I mean that segment of the right half of the political spectrum which attributes evil motives to recent and contemporary political leaders, which sees liberalism and Communism as being basically identical, and which opposes the United Nations and what it terms 'one-world internationalism.' . . . Rightists long for the 'good old days' in which 'Christian patriotism' was presumably revered by all and in which the income tax and civil rights marches were unknown." And, as Forster and Epstein noted in their own preface, "They undermine confidence in the integrity and patriotism of our elected leaders, our judicial system, our military leaders, our educators, our clergy, our labor leaders . . ." (p. xvii). With these thoughts in mind I leave it to the readers of *MISSION* to make their own comparisons between the literature emanating from Harding's National Education Program and literature generally reflecting the right wing of American political thought.

Edward G. Holley

Houston, Texas

You can't go home again (empty - handed)

There is nothing like going back to the old Christian college, I say. In fact, I am always saying that. Sometimes at lunch, or during a golf game, I stop and say, "There's nothing like going back to the old Christian college." Those very words, more or less. I have noticed it gets people's attention.

Five years ago, I returned to the mid-western campus where I matriculated. It is a great school. Our athletic teams are called "The Fighting Christians" (Eat 'em up, Christians! Eat 'em up, Christians! Eat 'em up, Beat 'em up, Stomp, Stomp, Stomp!"), and our school colors are black and blue. It was a thrill to be back.

As I walked around the campus, nostalgically remembering old triumphs, such as an occasional C plus, I met Dr. Conners, Vice-President in charge of JUG (Juicing Up the Grads).

"Hi there, Dr. Conners! Remember me? Gerald Smithers, class of '55."

"Sure thing, Smithers. Nice to see you. What're you doing these days?" Dr. Conners was giving me the quick once over, and I began to feel a mite uncomfortable in my ten-year-old Robert Hall suit.

"Oh, I'm an assistant clerk with the bank. It's a fine job, Dr. Conners. Plenty of room for advancement. I married Susie Wellington, as you probably recall, and we have six children now. I'll only be here for one night, I'm by myself, and I was wondering if I could bunk in the old deserted dormitory."

"Sorry, Smithers. If we let you do that sort of thing, we would have to extend the same courtesy to others. I'm sure you understand. This is a college we operate, not a Hilton hotel. Nice running into you, Smithers. Well, you'll excuse me, I've got a

very important meeting."

That was five years ago. Last year I sort of came into an unexpected inheritance. Thirty-five million dollars, to be exact. An aunt left it to me. I had no idea she was wealthy. Naturally, I was overwhelmed. Yesterday, I revisited my old alma mater, and once again I ran into Dr. Conners. He rushed toward me with his hand outstretched.

"Well, well, well! If it isn't *Gerald Smithers!* Gerald, how in the world are you?! It's wonderful having you back on the old campus! You look *great*, just great!"

I brushed the flecks of foam off my cashmere suit. "Thanks, Dr. Conners, I just dropped by to take in the big game and . . ."

"Ah, the old school spirit! You always had it, Gerald, yessiree.

"I always knew you were going places. Say, I heard how you just up and bought that bank where you were working! Oh, we were *tickled*, Gerald. To think that one of our own boys should—should . . ."

I handed him my handkerchief and looked away. I hate to see a grown man slobber. "Well, I did come into a little inheritance. Nothing to speak of, actually."

"Look, Smithers—I mean, Gerald—we want you to address the student body while you're here. And, by the way, I want you and your family to be our guests. No need of your getting a motel. And we're planning to award you an honorary degree at our next commencement. Also, you've just been voted Top Grad of the Year. And . . ."

I still can't get over how nice they are to the alumni, back at my old school. It kind of makes me weepy just to think of it. Hm-m-m. "Smithers Christian College." It does have a right nice ring to it.

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To Thomas Campbell

"That . . . nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christmas as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God.

"That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the conscience of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God."

Thomas Campbell

Good Father, sage, of Christian Freedom's pleas,
Whose soul the creeds of men did sore distress;
Who spread Communion's Table wide and free,
And wrote the *Declaration and Address*;
Who for the word alone would take your stand,
And said our doctrines from it, false or true,
Should not be bound upon our brother-man—
Good Father, sage, your children cry to you.

O speak to us today who wander far,
Who walk the bitter roads of strife and pain;
Show us once more the light of Freedom's Star,
That we may turn and to your faith be true,
And on our dark eyes there may burn anew
The vision bright of unity again.

—Don Reece

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Man's Greatest Conquest

Man, says Robert Hutchins, "is rational, and he cannot live by animal gratifications alone. . . . A man must use his mind; he must feel that he is doing something that will develop his highest powers. The twin aims that have animated mankind since the dawn of history are the conquest of nature and the conquest of drudgery." Surely, Robert Hutchins is correct in suggesting that one of the distinguishing characteristics of man is his desire to conquer.

Man's conquests are numerous and magnificent. He has gone far in satisfying many of his basic desires. He can feed three billion people. He can rechannel entire lakes to provide water for his thirst. His shelter is frequently cooled in the summer and usually heated in the winter. Of late, we have been awed at some of man's more spectacular conquests. On December 3, 1967, history's first cardiac transplant was performed on 55-year-old Louis Washkansky at a Cape Town, South Africa hospital by Dr. Christian Barnard. Then, man has actually traveled to the moon, which is surely one of his most glorious conquests of all time.

As great as these feats are, man has generally been unable to perform the greatest of all feats. The conquest of himself.

This is the victory that man must gain or all is vain. As advances in science double man's accumulated information every ten years, man must conquer himself or face destruction of nearly every aspect of human life which we value. Shortly before his death, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld said, "Unless the world has a spiritual rebirth within the next few years, civilization is doomed." Walter Lippman, not noted for his religious concern, said, "We ourselves were so sure that at long last a generation had arisen, keen and eager, to put this disorderly earth to right . . . and fit to do it . . . we meant so well, we tried so hard and look what we have made of it. . . . What is required is a new man." Man has attempted desperately to gain this new man. He has tried by changing his environment, psychology and sociology, but all in vain. Only through the new birth (John 3:7) can man receive the new heart (Ezekiel 36:26, 27) so desperately needed.

How can this new birth be brought about? Only as man humbles himself enough to listen to and obey the preaching of God's word. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:20, 21: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

The hope of mankind is not on the moon. Man who cannot see God on earth will not see him there. The hope of mankind is here on earth, within his heart.

—Larry Gibbons